

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN NIACT IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PFOR, JO, US

SUBJECT: KING HUSSEIN'S STATEMENTS ON HAWK ISSUE

FOR AMBASSADOR PICKERING FROM SISCO

1. WASHINGTON POST AND NEW YORK TIMES CARRIED STORIES
AUGUST 8 BASED ON KING'S LUNCHEON INTERVIEW WITH SIX
AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS ON PREVIOUS DAY. KING IS QUOTED
AS SAYING HE WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO TURN TO SOVIETS IF U.S.
CONGRESS TURNS DOWN PURCHASE OF 14 HAWK BATTERIES.
SPEAKING OF U.S. CONGRESS, KING IS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID,
"WHO IS ONE TALKING TO? IS IT RABIN IN WASHINGTON?"
RIFAI IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT CONGRESS WAS "PUSHING THE
ARABS INTO THE COMMUNIST CAMP" BY APPEASING SUPPORTERS OF
ISRAEL.

2. PETE LAKELAND CALLED DEPARTMENT MORNING STORIES
APPEARED AND SAID HE WAS CERTAIN THEY WOULD HAVE VERY
NEGATIVE EFFECT ON MEMBERS OF CONGRESS. FOR HUSSEIN
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AND RIFAI TO MAKE PUBLIC THREATS AND POSE ULTIMATUMS TO
CONGRESS WOULD INSURE BAD ATMOSPHERE WHEN HAWK ISSUE TAKEN
UP AGAIN IN SEPTEMBER.

3. I AM AFRAID LAKELAND IS RIGHT. IN ADDITION TO POINTS HE MAKES, KING'S RECENT EMPHASIS ON GROWING TIES WITH SYRIA (UPI INTERVIEW OF AUGUST 5) IS MORE LIKELY TO ENGENDER CONCERN FOR HIS RELIABILITY THAN INDUCE CONCESSIONS ON PART OF CONGRESS IN AN EFFORT TO PREVENT HIS GOING FARTHER IN THIS DIRECTION. IF KING AND RIFAI PERSIST IN CAMPAIGN OF THIS KIND, HOWEVER JUST THEY MAY CONSIDER THEIR CASE TO BE, I WOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT DAMAGE TO UNIQUE AND FAVORABLE IMAGE THE KING HAS IN THIS COUNTRY AND IN CONGRESS PARTICULARLY.

4. I HOPE YOU CAN PERSUADE KING AND RIFAI THAT WHOLE ISSUE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO REST DURING THIS IMMEDIATE PERIOD. WE UNDERSTAND HIS POINT OF VIEW COMPLETELY AND WILL DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO SEE THAT HIS NEEDS ARE MET. PUBLIC DEBATE OF THIS KIND MAKES OUR JOB WITH CONGRESS MORE DIFFICULT, HOWEVER, AND WE ARE CONCERNED THAT IT MIGHT DO MORE BASIC DAMAGE TO DEEP FRIENDSHIP WHICH EXISTS IN THIS COUNTRY GENERALLY AS WELL AS IN CONGRESS FOR JORDAN AND HIS MAJESTY IN PARTICULAR.

5. I KNOW YOU WILL HAVE TRIED TO EXPLAIN TO THE KING THAT POSITION OF CONGRESS ON HAWKS DOES NOT REFLECT LACK OF SYMPATHY FOR HIM AND HIS COUNTRY. THERE HAS BEEN NO QUESTION OF DEPRIVING JORDAN OF AIR DEFENSE. ISSUE IS RATHER ONE THAT HAS ARISEN IN RESPECT TO MANY COUNTRIES, NAMELY HOW MUCH ARMAMENT IS REALLY NEEDED TO DO THE JOB. IT WOULD BE TRAGIC IF REACTION OF KING TO THIS FUNDAMENTALLY SYMPATHETIC APPROACH TO JORDAN SHOULD DETRACT FROM EXTRAORDINARY IMAGE WHICH KING HAS BUILT UP OVER MANY YEARS HERE.

6. I APPRECIATE THIS IS NOT AN EASY TIME TO BE MAKING THESE POINTS TO THE KING, BUT I THINK THE COURSE HE IS ON IS SUFFICIENTLY UNWISE, IN TERMS OF U.S. REACTION, THAT WE MUST TRY. KISSINGER

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